

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, DC – Congress has appointed five commissioners, Elizabeth H. Prodromou, Richard Land, Don Argue, Ted Van Der Meid, and Nina Shea, to serve on the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). The Commission, comprised of nine commissioners, delves into the human rights “hot spots” of the world where freedom of religion is being obstructed and trampled, and offers policy solutions to improve conditions in that small but critically important point of intersection of foreign policy, national security, and international religious freedom standards. The Commission issued its 2010 annual report on May 1, calling on the Obama administration to designate 13 nations as countries of particular concern as contemplated under the International Religious Freedom Act.

Dr. Prodromou was reappointed by Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi. Dr. Argue was reappointed by the Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid. Dr. Argue and Dr. Prodromou currently serve as USCIRF co-vice chairs.

Dr. Land was reappointed on the recommendation of Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell. Mr. Van Der Meid was appointed on the recommendation of House Minority leader Rep. John Boehner to his first term. And Nina Shea was reappointed on the recommendation of Rep. Boehner.

“The Commission welcomes the reappointments of Dr. Prodromou, Dr. Land, Dr. Argue, and Nina Shea and the appointment of Ted Van Der Meid,” said Leonard Leo, USCIRF chair. “In recent years, Dr. Prodromou, Dr. Land, Dr. Argue, and Ms. Shea have each been extraordinarily valuable members of USCIRF, bringing years of research and insight to bear on the problem of international religious freedom. And we welcome Mr. Van Der Meid, whose extensive Capitol Hill background and experience as counselor and advisor to key members of Congress gives him the background and experience to deal with this important aspect of U.S. policy and national security concerns.”

Dr. Prodromou is Assistant Professor in the Department of International Relations at Boston University, where she is also the coordinator of the M.A. Program in International Relations and Religion and a Research Associate at the Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs. She has published widely on issues of religion and human rights, democracy, and security in Europe and the United States.

Dr. Richard Land has served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission since 1988. During his tenure as representative for the largest Protestant denomination in the country, Dr. Land has represented Southern Baptist and other Evangelicals' concerns in the halls of Congress, before U.S. Presidents, and in the media. In 2005, Dr. Land was featured in

*Time Magazine*

as one of The Twenty-five Most Influential Evangelicals in America. As host of "For Faith & Family" and "Richard Land Live!," two nationally syndicated radio programs, Dr. Land has spoken widely on the social, ethical, and public policy issues facing the United States.

Don Argue, Ed.D., was appointed Chancellor of Northwest University in Kirkland, Washington, on August 15, 2007, after serving as President of Northwest for nine years. He previously served as president of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE).

Mr. Van Der Meid, a native of Rochester, New York, is Of Counsel to McKenna Long and Aldridge. Prior to joining McKenna, he spent over 23 years on Capitol Hill, including as Counsel to Speaker J. Dennis Hastert and Director of Floor Operations. He served as chief counsel and chief of staff to the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, and as Counsel to the Republican Leader, Robert H. Michel.

Nina Shea, an international human rights lawyer for 30 years, is a Hudson Institute senior scholar, where she directs the Center for Religious Freedom, which she helped found in 1986. She is the co-author of a forthcoming book on religious freedom, titled

*Silenced*

, to be published next year by Oxford University Press. She was appointed as a U.S. delegate to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights by both Republican and Democratic administrations.

USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan U.S. federal government commission. USCIRF Commissioners are appointed by the President and the leadership of both political parties in the Senate and the House of Representatives. USCIRF's principal responsibilities are to review the facts and circumstances of violations of religious freedom internationally and to make policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and Congress.

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